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EASTERN NORTH AMERICA

West Virginia Faces
Spreading Revolt
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The open resistance in West Virginia, touched off by the happenings in the Green Bank and Sugar Grove areas, has expanded to the cities of Bluefield and Wheeling.

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12. West Virginia Faces Spreading Revolt

The en masse fleeing of top scientists from the Green Bank - Sugar Grove areas and the armed skirmishes in southeastern Pendleton County have counterparts in the recent occurrences in Bluefield and Wheeling.

In Bluefield, which is the commercial center of the great Pocahontas coal field, resistance was comparatively quiet -- but none the less effective. The middle rank of supervisory personnel unobtrusively gathered their families and slipped into adjoining Bluefield, Virginia, before dawn on Sunday morning, 18 June. The shipment of coal out of Bluefield was quickly reduced to half and the situation is steadily deteriorating. The PRWV is presently insisting on the return of many of the escapees claiming that they had absconded with huge sums of State money. As yet, however, the Virginia authorities have not so much as admitted that the missing persons are even in Virginia.

Wheeling, which is both an important bus, truck, and railroad transportation hub also the busiest industrial center of the entire PRWV, became engulfed in a series of city-wide crippling strikes followed by several instances of armed attack by night. The initial cause of the first strikes was the imposition of an additional 6-hours overtime (without pay) to the already 54-hour week in the metal and glass industries.

At 0800, 15 June, unarmed picket lines were formed outside the largest metal factory and the largest glass factory to turn away employees who came to work. At 1000, local police and PRWV militia arrived and ordered all workers, who at this time were milling around in front of the two factories, to return to work. In ensuing brawls, stones against bayoneted rifles, several people were killed or injured. Strikes grew not only in the major industries in which the additional overtime had been imposed but also in other businesses wherever there was aggravated discontent. Of these the most important in terms of bringing the output of the city to a standstill was the virtual closing-down of all transportation facilities.

The militia has begun to supplement the regular Wheeling police on night patrols. There have been several incidents of sudden attack on police patrols by apparently well-armed men who have struck suddenly and effectively and then fled. The latest casualty figure is three dead and fifteen wounded, none of whom have been from among the ranks of the attackers.